

# Ukuthasa Newsletter

Encouraging local communities in Africa



Issue 25

April 2010

## News from Emyezweni

*Deb Gregory, Grade R teacher and manager at the Emyezweni pre-school in the Western Cape of South Africa, gives an update on recent developments...*

**Volunteers:** Emyezweni continues to benefit from the relationship we've developed with a South African travel organization called Travel SA. We welcomed eight overseas volunteers last year who worked in school from one to three months and the children have loved learning about their homes and different cultures. Emyezweni staff have enjoyed making new friends and the volunteers have each told us how they have loved working with our special children. January 2010 has seen us welcome another full time member of staff, Sarah Richards from the UK is now teaching our Grade 2/3 class. Sarah is a newly qualified teacher and will be working with other staff members to provide a full and varied curriculum for our oldest class.

**Medical Screening:** All of the children in Emyezweni benefit from regular medical screening and care from Dr Susan Bingham, this means we can catch medical problems quickly and access levels of treatment not available to most South Africans. Through our connections with Dr Bingham and our Early Years network we are now involved with a programme run by the medical students from the University of Cape Town which will benefit at least 500 children in the communities of Lwandle and Nomzamo. This is a pilot programme which began initially in Emyezweni and is now being rolled out through other pre-schools in the locality.

**Grade R Outing to the Aquarium:** last term Grade R visited the Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town. This was part of our topic work on animals and was funded by the Ukuthasa sponsorship programme. We spent a wonderful morning exploring the animals and watching a puppet show which explained the aquatic food chain. It was a warm sunny day so we ate lunch outside and then spent a few hours looking at the boats and street theatre at the Waterfront. The children drew quite a crowd when they began dancing to some street musicians and we were asked to come back and perform again!

**Christmas:** Thanks to the generosity of Helderberg Christian Church we were once again able to hold an Emyezweni Christmas party and give each child a gift. The party was held on the last Friday of term and many volunteers helped us with preparations and serving the children. We had some great entertainment from Nick Groves and Daniel Bowley who came armed with their guitars and sang and danced with the whole school. Father Christmas arrived after lunch and each child went home with a present chosen for them by their class teachers.

Everyone returned to school at 6.00pm for our Christmas play and Graduation ceremony which went very smoothly this year. The Grade R and nursery children acted out the nativity story with some African twists and help from the toddler class. The Grade 1 class shared their best school experiences in Xhosa and English and the Grade 2 children showed off their recorder playing skills. Twenty two children from the Grade R class graduated and received their certificate and a pencil case full of writing equipment. These children have now returned to school to form our Grade 1 class for 2010.



Children in their Shepherd outfits.

## Child Sponsorship

If you would like to sponsor a Grade R child please contact Sue Whittaker (contact details over)

## Teenagers and the fight against HIV

One of Ukuthasa's goals is to play a part in life-changing programmes that will help reduce the spread of HIV/Aids. The **Ukuthasa Peer Education Programme** is now in its sixth year. Ukuthasa continues its partnership with the charity GoLD and Helderberg Christian Church, working with teenagers in secondary schools in The Western Cape. Charmaine Etson, project leader, reports...

An important part of the Peer Education Programme, our Community Service this year includes helping Macassar High School establish a vegetable garden. The valuable donation of compost and plants by GoLD was a starting point, but our Peer Educators had to pull together and work hard to prepare the soil and create the beds before they could start planting.

The head teacher's expectations were soon exceeded with seven beds being planted. Vegetables such as cucumbers, marrows, sweet potatoes, potatoes, carrots, green beans, tomatoes, beetroot, leeks, maize, various salads and herbs are now growing.



The headteacher is delighted with the result and has confirmed his commitment to this project in a letter of thanks, of which the following is an extract:-

*"I am personally involved with this garden so as long as I am the principal of this school, this Garden will continue not die."*

*As part of the ECO-schools of Helderberg the vegetable garden fits in our theme of healthy living. It is also the idea for teachers to identify learners of our school whose parents struggle to make a living so that we can provide those families with vegetables. It is also our intention to encourage parents to start their own vegetable gardens; our peer educators will aim to help by planting gardens at five houses within the community as a project for this year 2010.*

*We are grateful for organizations like Ukuthasa that are willing to invest in our school and the community."*

### INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Please visit our website [www.ukuthasa.org](http://www.ukuthasa.org) for more information. Alternatively, contact our fundraiser and administrator, Sue Whittaker by telephone on 01689 852345 or email [sue@ukuthasa.org](mailto:sue@ukuthasa.org).  
Postal address: 42 Longdon Wood, Keston, Kent, BR2 6EW

## Encouraging self-sufficiency

Ukuthasa continues to support two small-scale livestock projects in Zambia: a chicken project in Sikaunzwe and a pig project in Limalunga. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, pigs named Esther, Jonathan, Hannah, Chris and Gary are thriving. Plans are to develop a small-scale model that can be replicated and managed by two people. If successful, the plan is to help other families with start-up costs.. The costs would be paid back through the sale of livestock. In this way we hope to help families to feed themselves and create wealth.

## Other news in Brief

- Nicky Welsh has joined the **Choices** (crisis pregnancy centre) management team, Committed to working with GOLD *Peer education training Agency* for two days each week and has already completed a number of HIV workshops this year.
- Ukuthasa is sponsoring **HIV training** for the parents of Emyezweni children and these sessions (held once a term) have proved very successful. Almost 50 parents attended the session in February. A booklet in isiXhosa will be produced for the parents to keep at the end of the course.
- Negotiations are in progress for the first Ukuthasa **Rural Health Initiative** pilot. Watch this space!

## FOCUS ON FUNDRAISING

There are many ways you can support Ukuthasa, including using the following fundraising websites:

**www.easyfundraising.org.uk:** shop online from major stores who donate a % of each sale to charity

**www.recycle4charity.co.uk:** mobile phone & ink cartridge recycling

**www.jumbleaid.com:** sell unwanted goods and donate the proceeds

**www.everyclick.com:** a search engine that donates to charity 1p for every search you make

**www.livinggenerously.com:** buy unusual gifts for friends and family that directly benefit charity

### COMRADES MARATHON – 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010

Gary Welsh, co-founder of Ukuthasa, is participating in this gruelling event on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2010 to raise funds for our work. The 90km race from Pietermaritzberg to Durban in South Africa has been held since 1921 and attracts thousands of participants from around the globe. **Please dig deep and sponsor Gary by visiting his fundraising page**  
[www.justgiving.com/Gary-Welsh](http://www.justgiving.com/Gary-Welsh)

### BRITISH 10K LONDON RUN – 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010

Good luck to our six runners: Joe Lanksford, John Lewis, Michelle Mitchell, Marein Overbeeke, John Tompkins and Ruth Watson.

